



STAFF REPORT

Planning Commission Meeting Date:	April 28, 2026
Agenda Title:	ZOTA-26-1 – A Text Amendment to allow Hotels of up to 30 or 40 Rooms, as well as Clubs and Lodges, as By-Right Uses in the Central Business District
Requested Action:	Hold a Work Session
Department / Agency Lead:	Community Development
Staff Lead:	Heather Jenkins, Zoning Administrator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 14, 2026, Town Council adopted a Resolution to initiate a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to Articles 3, 9 and 12 to allow Hotels of up to 30 or 40 rooms, as well as Clubs and Lodges, as Permitted (by-right) uses in the Central Business District (CBD). A copy of the Resolution to initiate the text amendment is provided with this staff report as Attachment A. Currently, the Zoning Ordinance allows Hotels of up to 75 rooms, as well as Clubs and Lodges, as Permissible uses within the Central Business District, requiring the approval of a Special Use Permit by Town Council.

This text amendment must follow the process outlined in Zoning Ordinance Section 11-3.9 *Zoning Amendments*, where the Planning Commission must hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to Town Council no later than August 6, 2026.

BACKGROUND

The current Zoning Ordinance, adopted on February 14, 2006, classifies Hotels and motels, not exceeding 75 rooms, and Clubs and lodges, as use categories that require the approval of a Special Use Permit by Town Council, as stated in Ordinance Section 3-4.11.3 *Permissible Uses*. The requirement for Special Use Permit approval for these two use categories has been included in the Town's Zoning Ordinance back to at least 1976.

The 1976 Zoning Ordinance created the Central Business District (CBD) zoning district; prior to 1976 the area now currently zoned as Central Business District was likely* zoned Business (C-1) as found in the 1955 and 1959 Zoning Ordinances. (*Note – *official zoning maps from before 1976 have not been located.*). Prior to the 1976 Ordinance, Hotels were permitted, by-right uses in the Business (C-1) district; Clubs and Lodges did not appear as a separate use category until the 1976 Ordinance.

Zoning Ordinance Effective Year	Zoning District	Use Category	Approval Process	Ordinance Section
1955	Business (C-1)	Hotels	Permitted (by-right)	Section IX Zoning
1959	Business (C-1)	Hotels	Permitted (by-right)	Section IX Zoning
1976	Central Business District (CBD)	Hotels Clubs and Lodges	Permissible (with approval of a Special Use Permit)	Section 18-1.2
2006	Central Business District (CBD)	Hotels, not exceeding 75 Rooms Clubs and Lodges	Permissible (with approval of a Special Use Permit)	Section 3-4.11.3

The proposed Zoning Text Amendment will allow a smaller subset of the Hotel use category, limited to either 30 or 40 rooms, as a Permitted, by-right use in the Central Business District, while still requiring that Hotels above 30 or 40 rooms, and up to 75 rooms, be allowed as a Permissible use, with the approval of a Special Use Permit. The proposed Zoning Text Amendment will relocate altogether the Clubs and Lodges use category, to allow this use as a Permitted, by-right use in the Central Business District, and remove the requirement for a Special Use Permit. A copy of the draft changes to Zoning Ordinance Article 3 is included with this staff report as [Attachment B](#).

The Central Business District

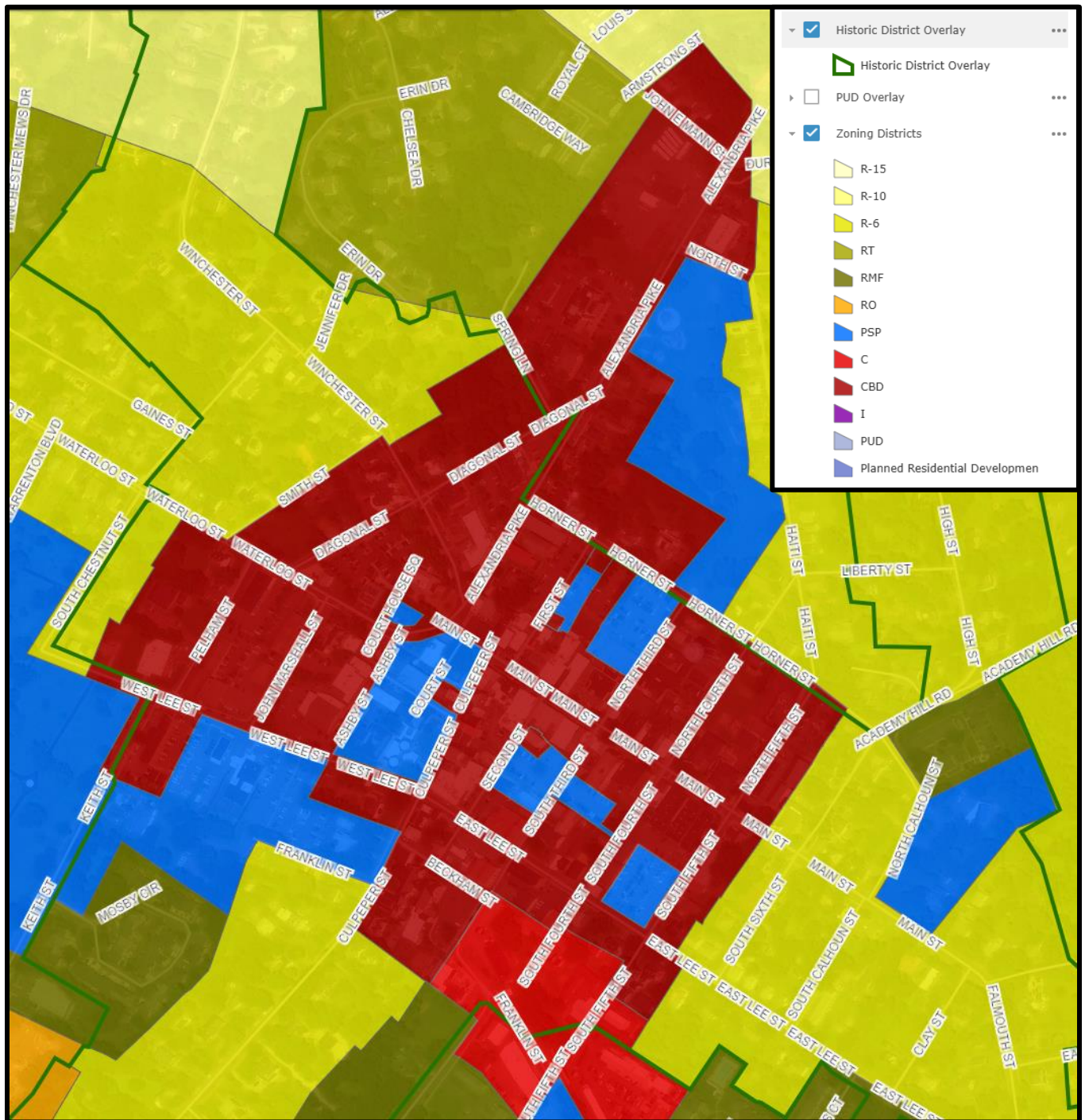
The Central Business District, as a separate zoning district, was established in 1976, as a part of the adoption of the newly revised Zoning Ordinance of the time, and encompasses the central, historic portion of the Town, radiating out from the intersection of Culpeper Street, Waterloo Street, Winchester Street, and Alexandria Pike. The majority of the Central Business District is encompassed by the Town's Historic District, with the exception of properties north of Horner Street and Spring Lane.

The Central Business District is described in Ordinance Section 3-4.11.1 *Legislative Intent* as:

Legislative Intent. *The intent of this district is to provide for orderly development, infill and revitalization of the central business and commerce area of the Town of Warrenton in accordance with objectives, policies, and proposals of the Comprehensive Plan of the Town; and for the logical and timely development of the land for primarily business purposes providing for higher density residential development, especially on the upper floors of structures on Main Street and encouraging a lively retail environment at the street level of Main Street. The district is designed to encourage the following:*

- *Re-use of existing buildings in ways that are compatible with and supportive of the purposes of the district and of the Comprehensive Plan.*
 - *Preservation of the unified, historic character of the district and its function as the retail and service center for Town citizens and visitors.*
 - *The creation and reinforcement of the street as a public space, defined by buildings fronting the street, to create a harmonious pedestrian environment for Town citizens and visitors.*
 - *Mixed uses within the district, including mixed uses within single structures.*
 - *A uniformity of design to ensure the orderly arrangement of buildings, land uses, and parking areas, and all construction hereafter proposed for this area.*
 - *A cohesive interrelationship of buildings in order to ensure a harmonious environment, allowing a degree of variety in building design provided said variety is within the overall historic, human-scale design framework of the district.*
-

- Maximization of a beneficial interrelationship between vehicular facilities (streets and parking lots), pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, malls and plazas), and commercial establishments, with a particular focus on pedestrian, convenience and safety.
- The provision of adequate, appropriately located off-street parking facilities.
- The architectural design and arrangement of buildings and spaces so as to conform to the general character and plans of the district.



Use Category Definitions

The two use categories that are considered as a part of the text amendment are Hotels and Motels, and Clubs and Lodges. These uses are currently defined in Article 12 *Definitions* as:

Hotel: *A facility offering transient lodging accommodations for ten or more individuals on a daily rate and providing additional services, such as restaurants, meeting rooms, and recreational facilities (also see Motel).*

Motel: *A building or group of two (2) or more detached or semi-detached buildings containing rooms or apartments having separate entrances provided directly or closely in connection with automobile parking or storage space serving such rooms or apartments, which building or group of buildings is designed, intended, or used principally for the providing of sleeping accommodations for automobile travelers and is suitable for occupancy at all seasons of the year.*

Club: *Buildings and/or facilities owned and operated by a corporation, association, or persons, which serves as a gathering place for a group of individuals organized for a common purpose to pursue common goals, interests, or activities and characterized by certain membership qualifications, payment of fees and dues, regular meetings, and a constitution of by-laws.*

Lodge: *(see Club)*

The current Zoning Ordinance allows for Hotels and Motels, not exceeding 75 rooms, as a Permissible Use that requires the approval of a Special Use Permit by Town Council, under Ordinance Section 3-4.11.3 *Permissible Uses*. This text amendment proposes to create a new subset of Hotels, of up to 30 or 40 rooms, to be allowed as a by-right use under Ordinance Section 3-4.11.2 *Permitted Uses*; Hotels with more than 30 or 40 rooms, and up to 75 rooms, would continue to require the approval of a Special Use Permit. Hotels and Motels have been required to obtain a Special Use Permit to authorize their use since the 1976 Ordinance; this proposed text amendment would remove the legislative approval requirement for smaller hotel facilities within the Central Business District.

The current Zoning Ordinance allows for Clubs and Lodges as a Permissible Use that requires the approval of a Special Use Permit by Town Council, under Ordinance Section 3-4.11.3 *Permissible Uses*. This text amendment proposes to entirely relocate the Clubs and Lodges use category from a Permissible Use to a Permitted, by-right use under Ordinance Section 3-4.11.2 *Permitted Uses*, and remove the legislative approval requirement for these uses altogether within the Central Business District.

Required Minimum Parking

Minimum required parking spaces are regulated by Zoning Ordinance Article 7 *Off-Street Parking and Loading*. Not all use categories listed as Permitted or Permissible uses in Article 3 are represented in Article 7, and so in some cases the minimum number of off-street parking spaces must be based off of the closest-available use category, based on parking demand information provided by the developer, or based off of research such as the requirements in other jurisdictions, as is permitted in Ordinance Section 7-8 *Uses Not Specifically Covered by this Schedule*.

Use Category	Minimum Parking Requirement	Ordinance Section
Hotel or Motel	One (1) space per room, plus one (1) space for each employee calculated for the work period containing the largest number of employees, plus additional spaces for restaurants.	Sec. 7-6 <i>Commercial Uses</i>
Restaurants, Sit Down	One (1) space per two hundred fifty (250) square feet of gross floor area.	Sec. 7-6 <i>Commercial Uses</i>
Civic Club or Org.	One (1) space per four (4) members, based on the designed occupancy load.	Sec. 7-4 <i>Institutional and Community Service Uses</i>
Country Club	One (1) space per four (4) members, based on the designed occupancy load.	Sec. 7-5 <i>Recreational Uses</i>

Parking for businesses located in the Central Business District are afforded additional flexibility beyond that allowed in other zoning districts, as included in Ordinance Section 7-9 *Special Parking Considerations for the CBD District*. This flexibility allows up to a 50% parking reduction through either reserved spaces in an off-site parking lot within 500 feet of the use, and/or a contribution to the Town's parking fund.

7-9.1 Off-Site Parking in CBD

In the Central Business District, up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the parking requirement for any use may be provided on an off-site parking lot located so long as it is within five hundred (500) feet of the use and the owner or applicant of the use provides to the Zoning Administrator a deed restriction, contract, easement, or some form of written agreement showing that the parking lot will remain available at such off-site location.

7-9.2 Parking Credit in CBD

In the Central Business District, in addition to the off-site parking provisions in Section 7-9.1, an owner or applicant may contribute to the Town's Downtown Parking Fund in lieu of providing up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the otherwise required parking for the site. Such fee shall be in accord with a fee schedule adopted by the Town Council.

Further flexibility is allowed for those uses that are located within 300 feet of a municipal parking lot, where a use may receive approval to forgo up to 100% of the minimum required parking spaces, as allowed by Ordinance Section 7-13 *Proximity to Municipal Parking Lots*. Section 7-13 waives all minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses as long as the use is within 300 feet of a Town-owned parking lot.

7-13 Proximity to Municipal Parking Lots

Any building or use located within three hundred (300) feet of an existing municipally-operated parking lot shall be exempt from the provisions of this Article. A parking demand study shall be required for the establishment of any new residential uses utilizing municipal parking lot spaces for required parking. The parking demand study shall include weekdays and both weekend days, parking availability at peak times, and the distance to the nearest municipal parking lot via a clear pedestrian path.

The flexibility offered In Ordinance Article 7 to non-residential uses in the Central Business District has the potential to completely waive all minimum parking requirements for a business. The specific location of any proposed Hotel, Club or Lodge in relation to an off-site parking lot or Town-owned parking lot would have to be determined with each individual application for that use.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests that the Planning Commission hold a work session to discuss this matter, and then provide guidance to staff. Staff specifically requests clarification on the number of hotel rooms to allow by-right - either 30 or 40 - as flexibility in the number of rooms was allowed as a part of the initiation by Town Council. Additionally, both Article 9 *Supplemental Use Regulations*, as well as Article 12 *Definitions*, were included in the Resolution to initiate the text amendment, should the Commission desire to set additional performance standards or revise the definitions for the use categories.

This text amendment can return to the Planning Commission on May 19, 2026, for either a second work session, or as a public hearing, at the Commission's direction.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

Utility Service Provision

The entirety of the Central Business District is served by Town water and sewer services via the Department of Public Utilities. Should Hotels, Clubs and Lodges be made into Permitted, by-right uses, these businesses would be served by Town-owned water and sewer.

Parking and Access

Parcels within the Central Business District are served by public roadways maintained by the Town. Due to the historic nature of the Central Business District area, public roadways or private accessways that serve a proposed Hotel, Club or Lodge may need to be evaluated with a vehicle turn analysis or other detailed schematic with each individual application to ensure adequate access by emergency response vehicles.

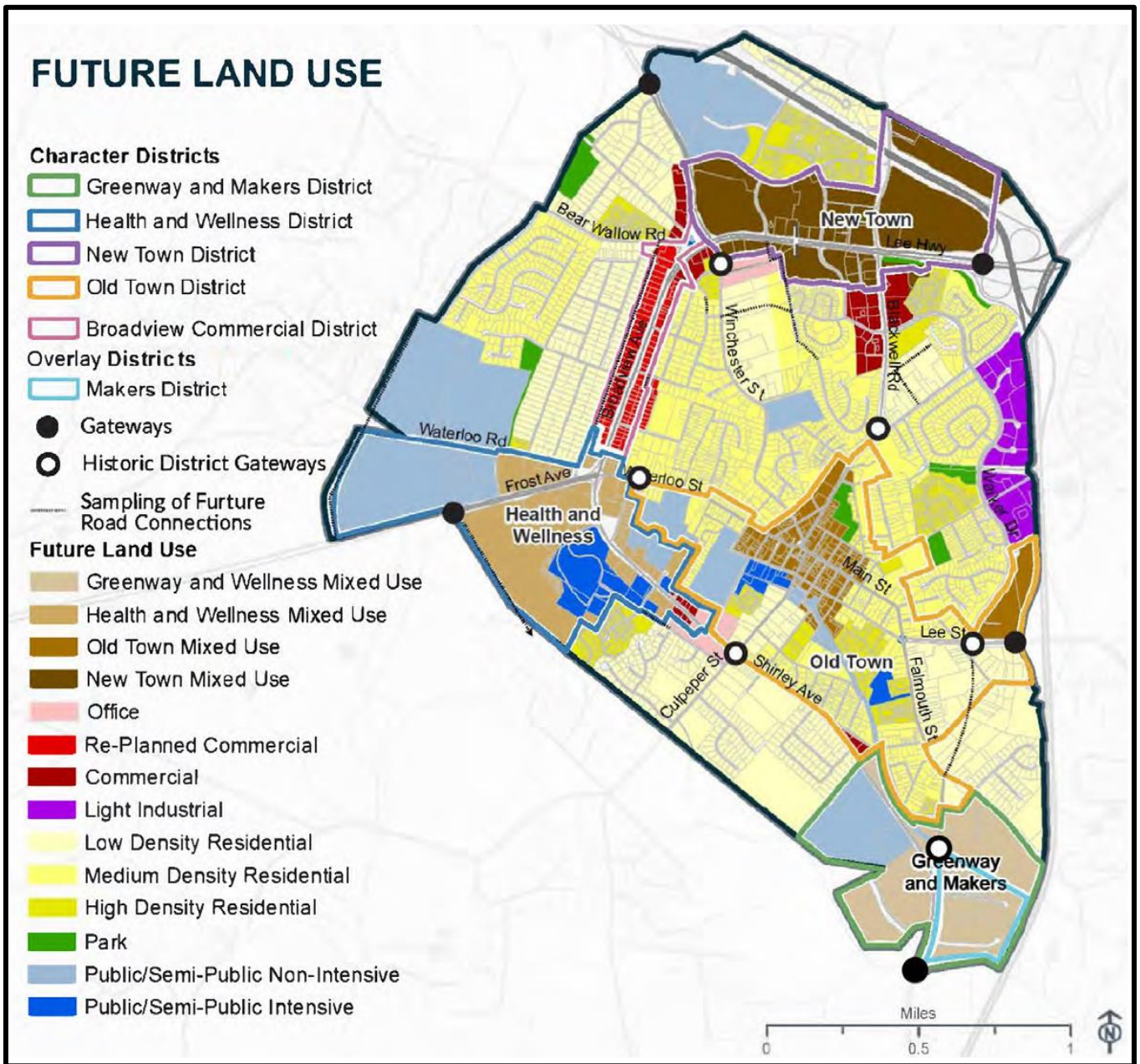
Trash and Waste Removal

Trash pick-up is provided to businesses within the Central Business District/Historic District in accordance with Town Code, where such service is provided by the Department of Public Works.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

The Comprehensive Plan, Land Use and Character District, states that the intent of the Central Business District is to provide for orderly development, infill, and revitalization of the District, and recommends additional Live/Work and Mixed-Use Residential (with commercial at the ground level) to be allowed.

The Future Land Use Map shows the Central Business District zoning district to be located within the Old Town District Character District, and the Old Town Mixed Use Future Land Use Area. The Comprehensive Plan describes the Old Town District as *Warrenton will continue to promote Old Town as the signature, cultural, social, and historic hub. The Town will encourage infill housing and other adaptive reuse of structures to bring more foot traffic to Old Town, but maintain the historic character and scale.*



Fiscal Impact

A Fiscal Impact assessment has not been completed.

Legal Impact

This text amendment will allow Hotels of up to 30 or 40 rooms, as well as Clubs and Lodges, as Permitted, by-right uses within the entirety of the Central Business District zoning district, where the use may be established with Administrative approval at the staff level with Site Development Plans and/or Zoning and Building Permits as regulated by Zoning Ordinance Sections 11-3.4 *Zoning Permits*, 11-3.5 *Building Permits*, 11-3.6 *Occupancy Permit*, and 11-3.7 *Site Development Plan*. This would remove the requirement for any such use in the Central Business District to obtain a Special Use Permit from the Town Council following public hearings as regulated in Zoning Ordinance Section 11-3.10 *Special Use Permits and Waivers*.

Where any proposed use is located in the Town's Historic District, any exterior changes to the structure or property requires the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness as regulated in Zoning Ordinance Section 3-5.3 *Historic District*.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A – *Resolution to Initiate 4-14-2026*
- Attachment B – *Draft Text Changes (red line)*